

# UNCLASSIFIED Department of State

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TELEGRAM

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E.O. 12356: N/A  
TAGS: PREL, PCOV, NAM, UN, AR, FA, UK, XM  
SUBJECT: ALFONSIN'S STATE-OF-THE-REPUBLIC ADDRESS:  
POLITICAL ISSUES

1. SUMMARY: ALFONSIN'S 2-HOUR STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS INAUGURATING THE FIRST ORDINARY SESSION OF CONGRESS FOCUSED, AS HAVE HIS OTHER RECENT SPEECHES, ON THE NEED FOR NATIONAL UNITY AND RECONCILIATION. THE POLICIES OF HIS GOVERNMENT, HE SAID, WILL BE THOSE THAT REFLECT A BROAD CONSENSUS OF ARGENTINE OPINION; HE DOES NOT WANT TO BE DIVISIVE AND HE HOPES THAT VARIOUS SOCIETAL GROUPS WILL BE PREPARED TO PLACE NATIONAL GOALS ABOVE SECTARIAN INTERESTS. HE CALLED FOR GENUINE DIALOGUE AMONG THE GOVERNMENT AND THE MANY OPPOSITION GROUPS, BECAUSE "WITHOUT RECONCILIATION . . . THE TENDENCIES TOWARD FRAGMENTATION WILL INTENSIFY." ALFONSIN CATALOGUED HIS ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE. (ECONOMIC COVERAGE WAS REPORTED IN SEPTEL.) HE EXPRESSED OPTIMISM ABOUT SETTLING THE BEAGLE CHANNEL DISPUTE WITH CHILE, REDUCING DIFFERENCES WITH GREAT BRITAIN OVER THE FALKLANDS, AND RESTORING NORMAL TRADE UNION ACTIVITIES AND A SYSTEM OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING. HE STATED THAT, WHILE ARGENTINA IS A MEMBER OF THE NON-ALIGNED BECAUSE IT DOES NOT WANT TO BELONG TO EITHER BLOC, ITS HISTORY AND VALUES PLACE THIS COUNTRY SQUARELY IN THE WEST. ON CENTRAL AMERICA HE EXPRESSED SUPPORT FOR THE EFFORTS OF THE CONTADORA GROUP. END SUMMARY.

THE PAST, ACCORDING TO ALFONSIN: "A LONG NIGHT OF HORROR AND DEATH"; THE FUTURE: UNITY THROUGH DIALOGUE AND PRIMACY OF NATIONAL INTERESTS

2. PRESIDENT ALFONSIN PROVIDED A DETAILED CRITICISM OF THE ERRORS OF THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT AND THE SITUATION HE INHERITED. "WE HAVE RECEIVED A COUNTRY AND A GOVERNMENT COMPLETELY WARPED AND PLACED AT THE SERVICE OF AN AUTOCRATIC AND REPRESSIVE POLITICAL PLAN." ARGENTINA STILL SUFFERS THE CONSEQUENCES OF

SEVERE DISTORTIONS IN ITS SCALE OF VALUES, AND WE STILL WITNESS THE VESTIGES OF CORPORATIST ACTIVITIES IN WHICH EACH SECTOR SELFISHLY DEFENDED ONLY ITS OWN INTERESTS." THE CHALLENGE FOR ALL ARGENTINES, REGARDLESS OF SECTOR AND REGARDLESS OF WHETHER IN GOVERNMENT OR IN THE OPPOSITION, IS TO CONSTRUCT NATIONAL UNITY THROUGH DIALOGUE AND RECONCILIATION. "THE PAST IS TOO RECENT FOR THE DANGER OF NATIONAL FRAGMENTATION TO HAVE DISAPPEARED, FRAGMENTATION THAT WOULD BE MUCH GRAVER THAN THAT WHICH WE HAVE ALREADY KNOWN. THE NATION IS STILL ON THE BRINK OF AN ABYSS."

3. THE PRESIDENT CATALOGUED A SCORE OF HIS GOVERNMENT'S ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS AREA, SUCH AS THE REPEAL OF THE AMNESTY LAW, PROSECUTIONS OF JUNTA MEMBERS AND TERRORIST LEADERS, TRIALS OF THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MALVINAS WAR, "DISMANTLING OF THE REPRESSIVE APPARATUS," AND THE AMENDMENT TO THE CODE OF MILITARY JUSTICE, AMONG OTHERS.

THE ARMED FORCES

4. THE PRESIDENT SAID THE MILITARY STRUCTURE OF ARGENTINA MUST BE REORGANIZED OVER TIME IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE THE BUDGET SAVINGS THAT SOCIAL REQUIREMENTS DEMAND AND THAT ARE CONSISTENT WITH AN EFFECTIVE AND PROFESSIONAL ARMED FORCE. "THE GOVERNMENT WILL NOT ATTEMPT TO FORCE UNIFORMITY OF THOUGHT ON OUR MILITARY CITIZENS, WHO HAVE THE RIGHT TO THINK IN CONFORMITY WITH THEIR OWN IDEALS AND CONCEPTIONS OF THE NATION AND THE STATE, WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE ARGENTINE CONSTITUTION." FOR ACTIVE-DUTY PERSONNEL, RESTRICTIONS "ON FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION" ARE THOSE DICTATED BY THE EXERCISE OF COMMAND AND OBEDIENCE. FOR "RETIRED PERSONNEL, THE LIMITS ARE THOSE ESTABLISHED BY THE CODE OF MILITARY JUSTICE AND THE NATIONAL PENAL CODE."

THE UNIONS

5. TURNING TO THE UNIONS, ALFONSIN SAID "DEMOCRACY CANNOT BE CONSOLIDATED IF WE DO NOT HAVE STRONG, REPRESENTATIVE AND DEMOCRATIC UNIONS," AND HE PROMISED NORMALIZATION OF TRADE UNION ACTIVITY. HE RECOGNIZED THAT SENATE DEFEAT OF HIS TRADE UNION PROPOSAL "OBLIGED THE GOVERNMENT TO SEEK OTHER WAYS OF ACHIEVING ITS OBJECTIVE OF DEMOCRATIC TRADE UNIONS." HE PROMISED THE EARLY ESTABLISHMENT OF SOME FORM OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING.

PRIVATE UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

6. WITH RESPECT TO PRIVATE UNIVERSITY EDUCATION, A PARTICULARLY DELICATE SUBJECT IN THE GOVERNMENT'S RELATIONS WITH THE CATHOLIC CHURCH (BEING REPORTED SEPTEL), ALFONSIN SAID THE GOVERNMENT WILL RESPECT THE FREEDOM OF PRIVATELY-OWNED UNIVERSITIES AND LIBERTY OF CHOICE BY STUDENTS.

FOREIGN POLICY: NO LONGER ISOLATED, BUT STILL NONALIGNED

7. ALFONSIN LISTED AS ONE OF THE MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS OF HIS FIVE-MONTH-OLD ADMINISTRATION ARGENTINA'S STEPS TO BREAK OUT OF THE INTERNATIONAL ISOLATION IMPOSED ON IT BECAUSE OF THE VARIOUS ACTS OF HIS MILITARY PREDECESSORS. HE CALLED ARGENTINA'S ACTIVE PRESENCE IN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, "A GUARANTEE OF THE STABILITY OF THE REPUBLIC AND ITS DEMOCRACY." HE SAID HE BELIEVED ARGENTINA'S IMAGE HAD CHANGED "FROM BLACK TO WHITE" IN THE WORLD'S EYES THANKS TO THE "MIRACLE OF ARGENTINE

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DEMOCRACY." HE EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT ARGENTINA WOULD BECOME "A MORAL RATHER THAN A MILITARY POWER," EMPHASIZING THAT ARGENTINES BELIEVE IN INDIVIDUAL LIBERTY, IN PLURALISTIC DEMOCRACY WITHOUT RESTRICTIONS OR CENSORSHIP AND IN THE FORMS OF GOVERNMENT THAT EXIST IN THE WEST. IN A MUCH APPLAUDED SECTION, ALFONSIN STRESSED THAT ARGENTINA WOULD REMAIN NONALIGNED, EXPLAINING THAT THE GOA "VIEWS WITH GREAT CONCERN THE NEGATIVE IMPACT ON OUR COUNTRIES OF THE EAST-WEST CONFLICT." AS BALANCE, HOWEVER, HE NOTED THAT ARGENTINA IS A WESTERN COUNTRY.

BEAGLE CHANNEL DISPUTE

8. ALFONSIN WAS OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE PROSPECTS FOR PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF THE BEAGLE DISPUTE. HE SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED THE JANUARY 23 BEAGLE CHANNEL DECLARATION THAT ARGENTINA SIGNED WITH CHILE (BUENOS AIRES 616) AND HIS BELIEF THAT CURRENT DIPLOMATIC NEGOTIATIONS BEING CONDUCTED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE POPE ARE THE MOST APPROPRIATE AND PEACEFUL MECHANISM TO REACH A SATISFACTORY AGREEMENT QUICKLY. HE ADDED THAT HE WAS ENCOURAGED BY RECENT CONVERSATIONS IN ROME, AND NOTED THAT THE CONGRESS WOULD HAVE TO MAKE THE FINAL DECISION ON WHAT THE NEGOTIATORS BRING HOME.

FALKLAND/MALVINAS ISLANDS

9. ALFONSIN ALSO EXPRESSED THE GOA'S DESIRE TO SEE A PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO THE MALVINAS DISPUTE WITH THE UK THAT IS IN ACCORDANCE WITH UN RESOLUTIONS. WHILE STATING THAT "WE WILL NOT CEASE FOR AN INSTANT TO STRUGGLE FOR THE FULL RECOVERY OF OUR RIGHTS OVER THE MALVINAS ISLANDS, AS WELL AS OVER THE SOUTH GEORGIA AND SOUTH SANDWICH ISLANDS, HE AFFIRMED THAT ARGENTINA'S INTERNATIONAL POLICY UNDER DEMOCRACY IS BASED ON THE PRINCIPLE OF PEACEFULLY RESOLVING CONFLICTS BETWEEN NATIONS AND RESPECT FOR THE DECISIONS OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY... IN THIS CONTEXT, ALFONSIN SAID THAT ARGENTINA HOPES THAT THE DIFFERENCES SEPARATING BOTH COUNTRIES CAN BE OVERCOME AND THAT THE UK, RECOGNIZING THE SPIRIT THAT MOTIVATES OUR ACTIONS, WILL SHOW AN EQUAL WILL IN SOLVING THIS CONFLICT.

CENTRAL AMERICA AND LATIN AMERICA.

10. THE PRESIDENT EXPRESSED THE GOA'S FULL SUPPORT FOR THE CONTADORA GROUP'S EFFORTS CITING NONINTERVENTION AND SELF-DETERMINATION, ESTABLISHMENT OF PLURALISTIC DEMOCRATIC SYSTEMS, AND CONDEMNATION FOR ALL FORMS OF EXPANSION OF THE CONFLICT THAT WOULD PUT THE (CENTRAL AMERICAN) CONFLICT IN TERMS OF THE EAST-WEST CONFRONTATION AS THE PRINCIPLES GUIDING GOA POLICY TOWARD CENTRAL AMERICA.

11. NUCLEAR POLICY WAS NOT COVERED.

12. REACTION AND COMMENT WILL FOLLOW. ORTIZ

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